

What's the West Nile?

West Nile Virus is a potentially serious illness that experts believe is a seasonal epidemic that flares up in the summer and continues into fall. The virus primarily is spread through infected mosquitoes that feed on infected birds then bite humans or animals.

In a small number of cases, the virus has been spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants. The best prevention is preventing mosquito bites.

The CDC recommends:

- Use insect repellent with an EPA-registered active ingredient when outdoors.
- Wear long sleeves and pants or stay indoors during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Make sure screens on windows and doors are in good condition.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by eliminating potential sites for standing water like flower pots, buckets, bird baths, wading pools, pet bowls, tire swings, etc.
- Do not handle dead birds with your bare hands. Contact Metro Health's Vector Control Program at 207-8853 and it will help assess the situation.

Symptoms and facts:

- Those infected tend to develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days.
- 80 percent of those infected will show no symptoms at all.
- WNV is not spread through kissing or touching.
- About 20% present mild symptoms like fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with skin rash and swollen lymph glands.
- About one in 150 infected people will show serious symptoms high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and, rarely, death.
- People over age of 50 are at higher risk.

What to do:

There is no specific treatment. Severe cases may require hospitalization so they can receive intravenous fluids, help with breathing and nursing care.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control, City of San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. Compiled by News Researcher Michael Knoop, San Antonio Express-News Read more:

http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/West-Nile-virus-kills-man-in-S-A-3807917.php#ixzz24Nxr6SvI